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ABSTRACT

Two studies were conducted at Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) to assess the academic performance of students who entered the college with low skill levels or test scores. The first study sought to assess the proportion of associate of arts (AA) graduates passing at least three of four of the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) subtests who had taken prior developmental course work. The study found that among students who passed three of four CLAST subtests there was virtually no difference in the percentage pass rate between students who took no developmental courses and those who took only one, though the pass rate for those who took more than one developmental class dropped dramatically. Using the criterion of passing four of four CLAST subtests, there was a difference between students who took one developmental class (57.8% passed) and those who took no developmental classes (73.6% passed). The second study sought to determine the number of students who were initially not eligible to enter the state university system on the basis of their test scores who succeeded in passing all four of the CLAST subtests. Study findings revealed that of 195 students not eligible to enter the state university, 97 passed all four CLAST examinations and 151 passed at least three of four subtests and were hence eligible to transfer to the state university system. (HB)

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SUCCESS ON THE CLAST FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO ENTER THE COLLEGE ACADEMICALLY UNDERPREPARED

Research Report No. 84-04
April 1984

ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS AT MIAMI-DADE WHO WERE INITIALLY NOT ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Research Report No. 84-30
December 1984

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SUCCESS ON THE CLAST FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO ENTER THE COLLEGE ACADEMICALLY UNDERPREPARED

Research Report No. 84-Q4

April 1984

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Success on the CLAST for Those Students Who Enter the College Academically Underprepared

One of the primary functions of the open-door, two-year college is to provide educational opportunity in support for those students who arrive academically underpreapred. There is long history but scant evidence addressing the efficacy with which the education of the academically underprepared is accomplished (Kulik and Kulik, 1983).

The work at Miami-Dade is consistent with the findings of other colleges in that students who score below the 25th percentile on standardized examinations do not graduate as often as those who score in the top quartile. This is hardly surprising and merely suggests that low scoring students have a lower probability of eventual graduation. However, it is also important to society to redirect and salvage as much talent as possible in this regard. The question for this research report is, of those students who graduated with an Associate in Arts degree and passed 3 of 4 CLAST subtests, how many had prior developmental coursework?

Using the criterion of passing 3 of 4 of the CLAST subtests, there is a clear difference in performance based on whether a student took developmental coursework in one, two, or three areas. There is virtually no difference in the percentage pass rate between those students who took no developmental courses and those who took only one. The pass rate drops dramatically for those who took two developmental courses. The number involved who wrote CLAST and also took three developmental classes is too small to make strong statements; but of the 37, only 15 passed.

If a student matriculates to the point of writing the CLAST, having taken one developmental course results in no less a pass rate than none, but since two or three does, a refresher effort would be especially important for those who took either two or three developmental courses.

Table 2, using the criterion of passing 4 of 4 of the CLAST subtests, reflects quite a different pattern. Here, it does make a difference

if even one developmental course was taken (73.6% pass if none taken, 57.8% if one). There is the distinct possibility that if the student took one developmental course, that area remains weak and is the 1 of 4 failed on the CLAST. A cohort study is now underway which will more directly address this possibility.

JL

References

Kulik, Chen-Lin C., Kulik, James A., & Shwalb, Barbara J. (1983). College programs for high-risk and disadvantaged students: a meta-analysis of findings. Review of Educational Research, 53 (3), 397-414.

Table 1

Performance of A.A. Graduates Who Earned Minimal Scores on at Least 3 of 4 CLAST Subtests for October 1983

	Performance on CLAST					
	Pass		Fail		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total A. A. Graduates Who Wrote CLAST	904*	86.5	141	13.5	1,045	100.0
Received No Remediation	634	93.0	48	7.0	682	100.0
Received Remediation in Any Area(s)	270	74.4	93	25.6	363	100.0
Received Remediation in One Area	178	86.4	28	13.6	206	100.0
Received Remediation in Two Areas	76	63.3	44	36.7	120	100.0
Received Remediation in Three Areas	16	43.2	21	56.8	37	100.0
Reading Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Reading Subtest	999	95.6	46	4.4	1,045	100.0
Received No Remediation in Reading	847	97.1	25	2.9	872	100.0
Received Remediation in Reading	152	87.9	21	12.1	173	100.0
Writing Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Writing Subtest	906	86.7	139	13.3	1,045	100.0
Received No Remediation in Writing	776	92.1	67	7.9	843	100.0
Received Remediation in Writing	130	64.4	72	35.6	202	100.0
Computation Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Computation Subtest	965	92.3	80	7.7	1,045	100.0
Received No Remediation in Mathematics	823	95.4	40	4.6	863	100.0
Received Remediation in Mathematics	142	78.0	40	22.0	182	100.0

*An overall passing performance on CLAST indicates that the examinee has met or exceeded State-required minimum scores on at least 3 of the 4 subtests.

Table 2

Performance of A.A. Graduates Who Received Minimal Scores on All 4 CLAST Subtests for October 1983

	Performance on CLAST					
	Pass		Fail		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total A. A. Graduates Who Wrote CLAST	654*	62.6	391	37.4	1,045	100.0
Received No Developmental Coursework	502	73.6	180	26.4	682	100.0
Enrolled in Any Developmental Course(s)	152	41.9	211	58.1	363	100.0
Took Developmental Course(s) in One Area	119	57.8	87	42.2	206	100.0
Took Developmental Course(s) in Two Areas	26	21.7	94	78.3	120	100.0
Took Developmental Course(s) in Three Areas	7	18.9	30	81.1	37	100.0
CLAST Reading Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Reading Subtest	999	95.6	46	4.4	1,045	100.0
Took No Developmental Coursework in Reading	847	97.1	25	2.9	872	100.0
Enrolled in Developmental Reading Course(s)	152	87.9	21	12.1	173	100.0
CLAST Writing Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Writing Subtest	906	86.7	139	13.3	1,045	100.0
Took No Developmental Coursework in Writing	776	92.1	67	7.9	843	100.0
Enrolled in Developmental Writing Course(s)	130	64.4	72	35.6	202	100.0
CLAST Computation Subtest						
A. A. Graduates Who Wrote Computation Subtest	965	92.3	80	7.7	1,045	100.0
Took No Developmental Coursework in Mathematics	823	95.4	40	4.6	863	100.0
Enrolled in Developmental Mathematics Course(s)	142	78.0	40	22.0	182	100.0

*An overall passing performance on CLAST indicates that the examinee has met or exceeded State-required minimum scores on all 4 subtests.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS AT MIAMI-DADE WHO WERE INITIALLY NOT ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Research Report No. 84-30

December 1984

John Losak

Miami-Dade Community College

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Academic Progress of Students at Miami-Dade Who Were Initially Not Eligible for Enrollment in the State University System

John Losak

One of the primary missions of the two-year college is to provide instruction for large numbers of students who are denied admission at the State University System, based primarily on test scores.* The mission implies that a parallel course of academic programs should be offered which would prepare these students to: a) receive an Associate in Arts degree b) compete at the upper division with native students who are initially eligible to enroll directly in the State University System.

The purpose of this paper is to present data on student performance on the CLAST for those who were initially below scores judged to be equivalent to scores required for entrance into the State University System. The State University System in Florida uses as minimal scores an 840 total on the Scholastic Ability Test (SAT) or a composite score of 17 on the American College Testing Program (ACT). These scores are minimal and at many of the universities the mean score for the entering freshman class is as high as two standard deviations above these minimal scores.

For the purpose of this study, students were defined whose scores were comparable to those below which students would not be acceptable to the State University System. On the Comparative Guidance and Placement test used as a basic skills placement instrument at Miami-Dade, all students who earned a score below the 65th percentile on <u>each</u> of the three examinations were included in the study if they wrote the CLAST examination in September 1984.

*Research Report 84-04 addresses this issue from a somewhat different perspective.

Selecting equivalent scores on two examinations is far from precise. The score was arrived at by having independent judgments made by Dr. M. Belcher, Dr. L. Steed, and myself. After some deliberations on the scores offered which were (surprisingly) quite close, the 65th percentile was chosen. I think the error is on the side of underinclusion, therefore rendering the final estimate conservative. That is, the number is a minimal number of students who were initially not eligible to enter the State University System but who passed all four of the CLAST subtests. Of those students whose number was 195, 50% for a total of 97 passed all four examinations. Therefore, 195 students who were initially unable to enroll directly in the State University System were given sufficiently adequate instruction to complete the first two years of college with a satisfactory 2.0 or better and be eligible to graduate dependent only on CLAST score performance. One hundred fifty one (151) students passed 3 or 4 CLAST subtests and may transfer to the State University System.

Although one cannot reasonably draw cause and effect relationships based on these figures between a course, or series of courses, and performance (e.g., compensatory courses) one can certainly draw cause and effect relationships between the total instructional program and student performance. It is clear from the evidence that many students who arrive underprepared, defined by their inability to move directly into the State University System, have been adequately educated to the point of receiving an A.A. and passing all four of the CLAST examinations.

Previous research has shown that the A.A. graduates from Miami-Dade compete quite effectively with native students in the University System based upon grade point average ranges supplied by the Division of Community Colleges (12/21/83). Therefore, it is clear that for some students the

College has achieved one of its primary missions of providing a parallel education for the first two years.

While it is easy to forget that the scores used by the University System are driven primarily by such factors as politics, economics, and alleged space considerations, one should keep in mind that these factors and not student learning drive their use in selection of test scores to deny admission. The evidence presented from student success at Miami-Dade is another support for the preferred approach to establish relationships between test score use and outcomes related to student learning. Miami-Dade has been able to avoid the waste of talent that would occur individually to students were they not given the opportunity to enter a community college parallel transfer program and successfully acquire the academic skills expected for the Associate degree.

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